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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
18 April 1975

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Indochina
(As of 1600 EDST)
No. 16

VIETNAM

East of Saigon

1. South Vietnamese forces on the Xuan Loc battlefield are still crumbling as the result of sustained communist attacks. At least one of the communist attacking divisions --the 6th--has pulled away from the battlefield and is now swinging to the south, either headed for Vung Tau or around the government's southern flank and on towards Saigon.

2. A large gap in the defensive perimeter of Bien Hoa was filled on April 18 when a brigade of Marines was moved into blocking positions to the north of Bien Hoa. Despite airstrikes against North Vietnamese artillery positions used for firing at Bien Hoa, the airbase has been hit again with large-caliber artillery and rockets.

South and West of Saigon

3. The communists are bringing the fight closer to Saigon. On April 17-18, a flurry of communist attacks in Long An Province spread to the outskirts of the capital. A number of smaller positions were overrun and many others hit hard with shellings and ground attacks.

4. Meanwhile, both sides are reinforcing southwest of Saigon. The communists have moved two regiments of their 8th Division into Long An Province and at least two regiments of the North Vietnamese 9th Division

NSA review(s) completed.

State Department
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are now believed to be in southern Hau Nghia Province. The South Vietnamese have now committed most of their 7th Division to the Route 4 area on both sides of Tan An. Two partially regrouped regiments of the broken 22nd Division have also been dispatched to Long An Province. These units together with the territorial forces are, nevertheless, no match for the communist forces--in excess of three divisions--now converging on Saigon from the southwest.

Communist Units Mass Northeast of Saigon

5. The Communists soon will have 17 full divisions to commit against remaining government positions defending Saigon and the delta, and will outnumber the government forces by about two-to-one. The South Vietnamese have only seven divisions; three others are in the process of rebuilding. Moreover, Communist artillery attacks are threatening to close down government airbases close to the capital. Without this air support, the South Vietnamese will be greatly outgunned as well as outmanned.

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6. [redacted] the North Vietnamese 1st Corps [redacted] and three infantry divisions have moved into Military Region 3 or are fast approaching it. [redacted] has moved to a position near the border of Binh Long and Binh Duong provinces from its previous location in Quang Duc Province. Another division of the corps--the 320B which left North Vietnam in late March--has now been spotted in Long Khanh Province, where it joins another corps subordinate--the 312th Division.

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7. The other two divisions of the 1st Corps--the 308th and the 338th--are still moving south, but should reach the region in a matter of days. In addition, large amounts of heavy equipment, including tanks, 130-mm. field guns, and SA-2 missiles and radars, are moving south. Some of this hardware has already arrived in northern MR 3.

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8. [redacted] the 325th Division near the eastern border of Long Khanh Province. This confirms captured documents which had indicated that some division units were involved in the

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fighting around Xuan Loc. The 325th earlier fought at Da Nang. Moreover, a second division from the northern front, the 304th, has also moved south and is now in Lam Dong Province.

9. Three additional divisions in the southern highlands have given signs of shifting westward into the provinces east of Saigon. One of them--the 316th--could already be in place. The other two--the 10th and the 320th--have been engaged in mopping up operations along the coast. The 10th has been noted moving west, however, and it is now in Lam Dong Province. Both divisions could move into MR 3 in a few days.

Little Hope

10. General Nguyen Van Toan, the commander of the provinces ringing Saigon, bluntly told the Joint General Staff in a briefing on April 18, that the communists were now in a position to put military pressure on his forces which could not possibly be contained. Toan stated that his reserves, including parts of the Airborne Division, have taken heavy casualties, are exhausted, and cannot fight much longer. The entire staff, including its chief, General Vien, accepted Toan's briefing and its conclusions without offering any comments or suggestions.

CAMBODIA

11. So far there is no information to confirm or deny the rumor picked up by the Associated Press office in Bangkok that the Khmer Communists have executed 21 foreign journalists in Phnom Penh. Radio Phnom Penh remains off the air and the French representative in the capital is now apparently maintaining the only contact with the outside. The French ambassador in Bangkok told Ambassador Dean that there had been some "turmoil" in the city this morning and vaguely sourced new accounts allege that many civilians fled Phnom Penh following Communist claims of impending US bombings. These reports suggest that the Communists are carrying out their plans to evacuate a large part of Phnom Penh's population to the countryside.

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insurgent officials in northern provinces were prepared to "receive refugees," presumably from Phnom Penh.

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12. On the diplomatic front, the ASEAN nations and Portugal today announced their recognition of Sihanouk's "government." Japan announced that it would establish ties as soon as possible but Prince Sihanouk told a Japanese newsmen in Peking that any such attempt would be rebuffed because of Tokyo's support for the former Lon Nol government. Cambodian embassy officials in Kuala Lumpur and Tokyo have proclaimed their willingness to serve the new regime in Phnom Penh.

13. Prince Sihanouk has received numerous congratulatory messages. The most interesting of these was a telegram from Soviet leaders Breznev, Podgorny, and Kosygin who made the somewhat lame statement that "the Soviet Union has always supported the Cambodian patriots." Moscow also promised to "support . . . efforts to build a peaceful, democratic, independent, neutral and flourishing Cambodia."

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14. [redacted] Cambodian Army troops have abandoned the town of Samrong--in the northwestern province of Oddar Meanchey--and have moved to a village on the Thai border. Officers at Samrong had earlier indicated that they plan to organize a resistance movement but the local population reacted negatively and these plans have presumably been scrapped. Press reports indicate that large numbers of Cambodians have fled into Thailand from the northwestern provincial capital of Pailin. A Communist commander [redacted]

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[redacted] would take few military prisoners when he took the town, suggesting that he plans to execute any remaining Cambodian Army troops. There have been no further reports on the status of any other provincial enclaves.

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